

**STOCKGROWERS  
RODEO COMING**

**SATURDAY** » Ranchers ready to show off skills, **PAGE A10**

# WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



Enterprise, Oregon

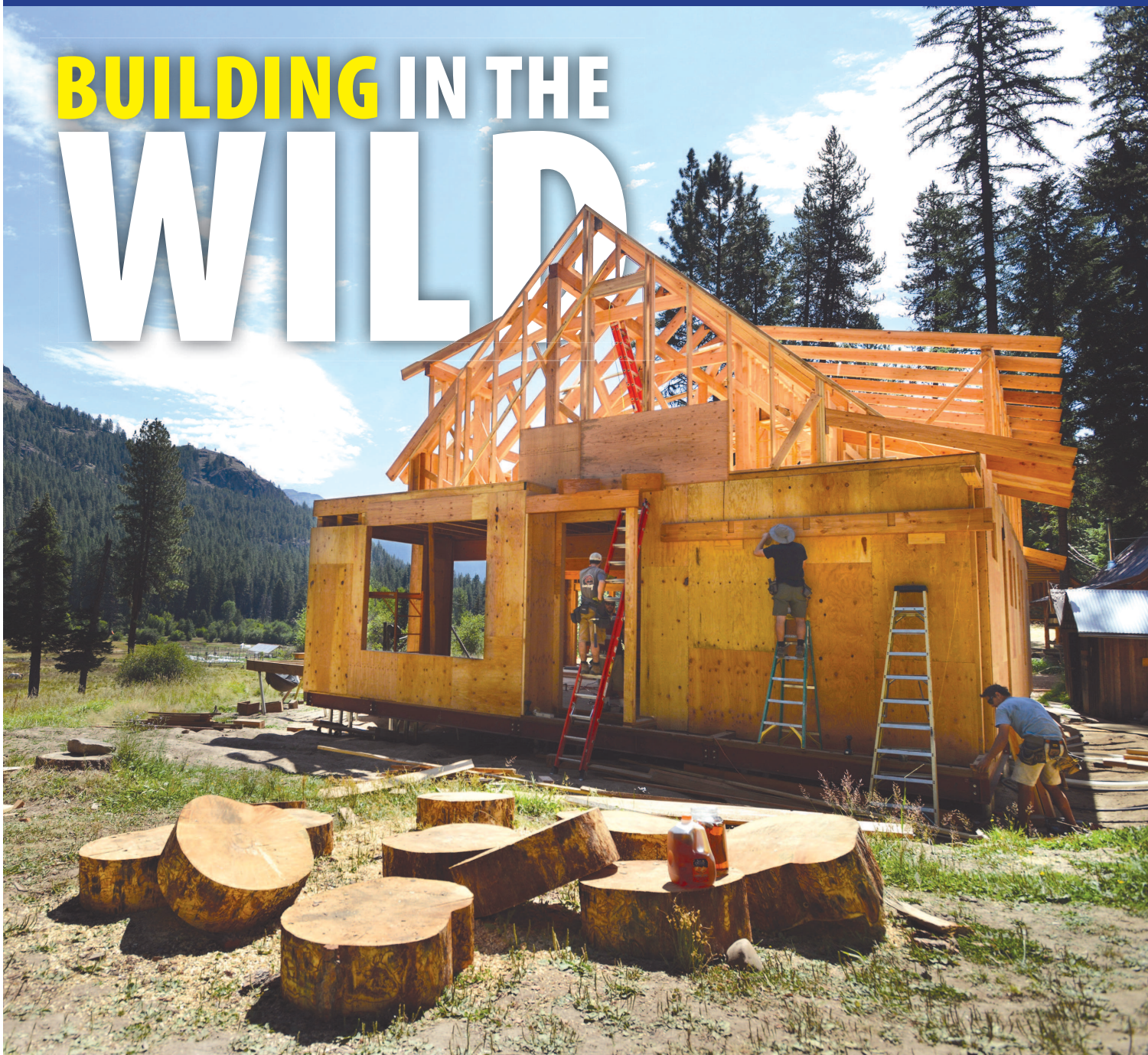
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## MINAM RIVER LODGE

# BUILDING IN THE WILD



E.J. Harris/East Oregonian

Crews work on rebuilding the Minam River Lodge in the Eagle Cap Wilderness Area east of La Grande.

## Luxury lodge rising deep in wilderness

By **Tim Trainor**  
East Oregonian

**W**hen the Minam River Lodge was built in 1950, livestock hauled in most of the equipment.

A sawmill was constructed on site to build the lodge and cabins, but mules provided the muscle when a 400-pound refrigerator needed to travel up and down the mountains to its new home deep in the woods.

Now, 56 years later, as the crumbling lodge and old refrigerator is being replaced, some things have changed but many have not.

The helicopters are new. Construction manager Ben Gates, of UP Architecture in Portland, conscripted copters to make 97 supply drops into the 127-acre inholding that is surrounded entirely by the Eagle Cap Wilderness. Everything from timber to glass touched down at a small airfield within sight of the main lodge. At a cost of more than \$2,000 an hour to rent a helicopter, just bringing in supplies cost “six figures,” said lodge owner Barnes Ellis.

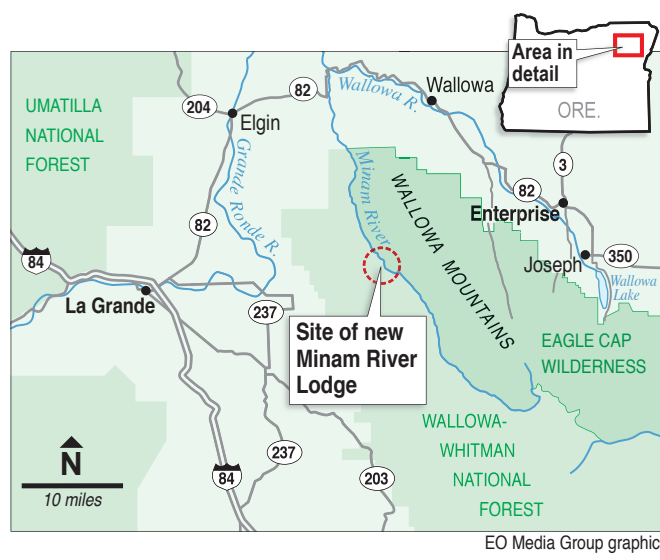
Ellis is a former reporter for *The Oregonian* turned investment banker who lives in Portland. He vacationed at the property growing up and purchased the property at auction in 2011.

See **LODGE**, Page A12

**Check out our online video** of a landing on the Minam Lodge runway, **Wallowa.com**



**Minam River Lodge owner Barnes Ellis unloads supplies off of a plane at the airstrip at the Minam River Lodge. All supplies for the lodge must be flown in from La Grande.**



EO Media Group graphic

“There is no forgetting this place.”

**BARNES ELLIS**  
lodge owner



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

**Amy Keiter smiles through the open doors of husband Robert Donatz's Cessna 195 as she explains the rare plane to visitors at the Wallowa County Fly-In on Saturday.**

## Pilot stories abound at latest Fly-In

Dozens of pilots, hundreds of attendees enjoyed a beautiful day

By **Kathleen Ellyn**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Amy Keiter of Beaverton is famous — and not just because her pilot husband Rob Donatz can park his 1950 Cessna 195 with an impressive tail wheel to bursts of applause.

Yes, the Cessna 195 is pretty stupendous, powered by a Jacobs 300-horsepower radial engine that makes the gear heads salivate.

But Amy is famous in her own right due to the column she submitted to *The Oregonian* back in 2002 about their first experience at the Wallowa County Fly-In. Back then, the event was nowhere near its current size, with scores of pilots in rare, restored or just plain interesting planes and hundreds upon hundreds of visitors.

Nevertheless, the Joseph airmen put on a heck of a show back in 2002, and Keiter and Donatz were glad they came with friends that year. Their friend's Cessna 182 “crapped out” at the event, refusing to start when it came time to leave.

They were all on their way to remote Moose Creek in Idaho for a camping trip to celebrate Amy and Rob's first anniversary. Now, stuck at Joseph Airport after the show, they experienced “the kindness of strangers” so extraordinary it felt like a novel.

“People were just like crazy nice,” Amy recalls. “We woke up the morning after when a farm truck pulled up and a guy from Enterprise said, ‘I heard you had engine trouble and I thought I'd drive over and see what I could do.’”

See **FLY-IN**, Page A9



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

**Greg, 9, takes a ride with experienced pilot Tim Locke and his “almost a pilot” adoptive uncle Emmet Wold.**

## Rowena Patton named Homemaker of the Fair

Enterprise woman excelled at quilting, flowers, repurposed denim creations

By **Scot Heisel**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

If you walked through the Wallowa County Fair exhibits at Cloverleaf Hall last week, it's a near certainty that at least one item in the room from that caught your eye came from Rowena Patton.

The Enterprise woman has been entering crafts, goods and quilts for years, and her efforts this year earned her the coveted Homemaker of the Fair Award. To be eligible, contestants must submit entries for the Floriculture, Baked Goods, Food Preservation and Textiles



Courtesy of Gail Hillcock

**Homemaker of the Fair Rowena Patton. The red and black quilt on the wall was among her many award-winning entries. More Fair photos, B1**

categories.

Her favorite category this year? Creating textile goods out of repurposed denim jeans.

“I made one for every category,” Pat-

ton said. That's 12 entries in the textiles category alone.

And her flower arrangement was named Best of Show.

“For flower arrangement, you don't

have to use your own flowers,” she said. “But I have a lot of flowers, so I like to use my own.”

To ensure the freshest arrangement, she waited until the last minute to cut her flowers.

“I was out picking flowers in the rain,” she said.

This isn't the first time Patton has won the top homemaker award. She's been entering items since she and Wesley, her husband of 65 years, moved to the county in the 1970s.

“I've won it two or three times now,” she said, before revealing one of her secrets of fair success.

“I'm a reader. We don't have a TV. It's amazing what you can get done when you don't have a TV.”

**Editor's note:** The Chieftain has yet to receive full results from the fair exhibits. Additional results will be published at a later date.



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